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NSC BRIEFING NOTES

WESTERN DIVISION
4 January 1955

ASSASSINATION OF PANAMANIAN PRESIDENT MAY BRING INSTABILITY TO
PANAMA

- I. Assassination of Panamanian president Remon on 2 January may introduce a new period of political instability in Panama.
 - A. José Remon Guizado, first vice president and foreign minister sworn in as president on 3 January. He will, according to constitution, complete Remon's term scheduled to end in October 1956.
 - B. Guizado's administration can not be expected to have the strength which characterized that of Remon, whose position was based on personal following among politicians, the National Guard, and the public.
 - C. The government remains in control of the situation, however, and the National Guard, Panama's only armed force, reportedly is supporting Guizado.
- II. Remon's death may delay formal signing--now scheduled for 12 January--of new agreements between Panama and the United States on the Canal Zone.
 - A. Guizado, whose attitude toward the United States is unclear, stated on 31 December that his sole interest is getting the new agreements signed "earliest."

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INSERT page 2, under III. A. on earlier draft will become B.

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III. A.

[REDACTED]

considers

the assassination a prelude to a Central American

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flare-up. [REDACTED]

Remon

had reported to President Perez Jimenez two weeks ago that Cuban gunmen were planning to liquidate both presidents.

s/s

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1. Guizado an ardent admieer of anti-US Arnulfo Arias, ousted former president of Panama, in the late forties. He later gave strong support to the United States in the UN during the Seventh General Assembly.
2. Guizado was active in the negotiations for revision of the canal zone treaty, and visited various Central American countries and Mexico seeking support for the Panamanian stand.
3. One report indicated that Guizado has a "none too savory" reputation in business and public office.

B. Communists, numbering only 50, with perhaps 200 additional sympathizers, may in combination with other oppositionists attempt to exploit the assassination and the treaty issue through disorders.

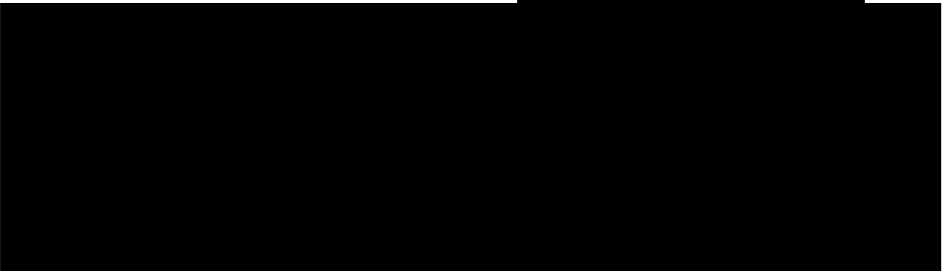
III. Still no definite clue as to the identity and motives of the assassins. Seems likely that Arnulfo Arias--~~was~~ deposed by Remon in 1951--may have engineered the assassina-
tion. Possibility that some followers of President Figueres of Costa Rica might have been involved cannot be entirely discounted.

A. Some indications that President Remon might have been indirectly involved in some Venezaelan-Nicaraguan plan to eliminate Costa Rican president Figueres.

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1. Principal connections between Remon and Venezuela appear to be:
 - a. An informal economic agreement which appeared to be a straight business transaction.
 - b. A Venezuelan military mission which has been training the Panamanian National Guard-- Panamanian military officials in Venezuela for training.
 - c. Various shipments of arms to the Panamanian National Guard early in 1954.
 - d. Long standing friendship between President Perez Jimenez and Remon.
 - e. Only on one occasion did Remon become involved directly in the continuing Central 25X6A American war of nerves:

25X6A

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2. Remon apparently disliked and distrusted Figueres, and possibly was willing to assist indirectly in making trouble for him.
 - a. Reports of collaboration between Arnulfo Arias and Figueres, however, are not substantiated.

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- b. Panama arrested one Costa Rican revolutionary leader on 5 December at the request of the Costa Rican Chargé, and in July asked the brother of former Costa Rican president Picado to leave Panama.
- c. Costa Rican Foreign Minister, however, as late as December suspected that Revolutionary activities against Costa Rica might start or be assisted from Panama.

- 3. Remon and Nicaraguan dictator Somoza apparently have remained cordial.

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- a. One report indicated, however,

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Remon did not trust Somoza.

- 4. Available reports do not indicate the nature of the relationships of newly installed President Guizado and Presidents Perez Jimenez, Figueres, and Somoza.

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